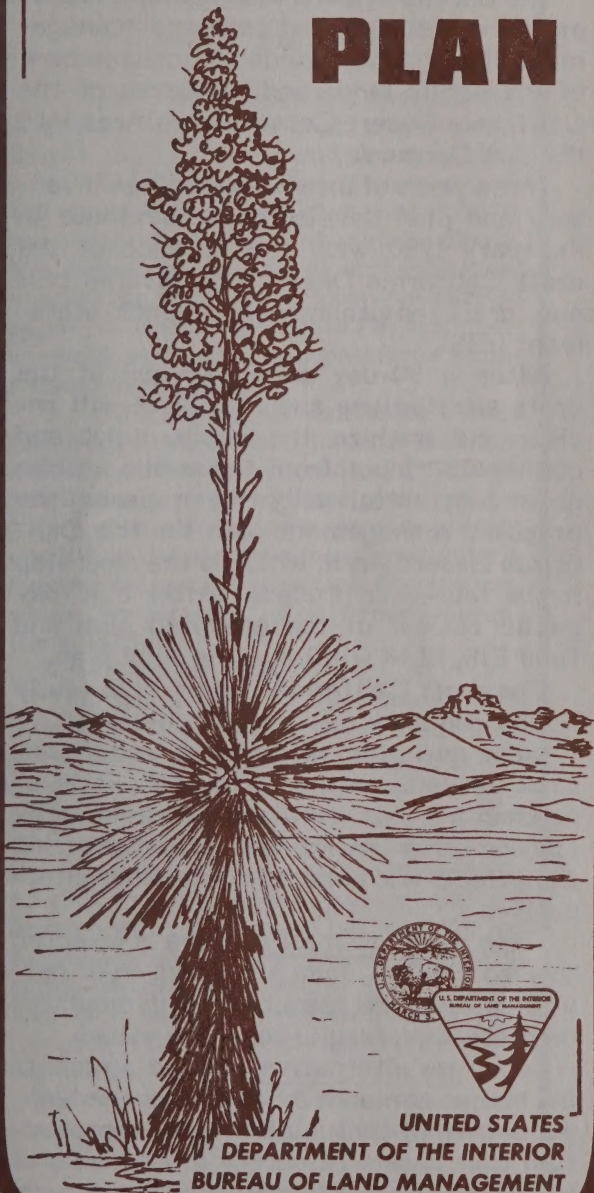




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The California

DESERT PLAN



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

CALIFORNIA DESERT

Draft Plan Alternatives and Environmental Impact Statement

The Bureau of Land Management is preparing a land use and resource management plan that will guide the management of the public lands and resources of the California Desert Conservation Area into the 21st Century.

Three years of intensive resource inventory and plan development culminate in February 1980 with the issuance of the draft California Desert Plan alternatives and draft environmental impact statement (EIS).

After a 90-day public review of the draft alternatives and EIS, BLM will review and analyze the public input and comments. Input from the public will be given substantial weight in preparing the proposed management plan for the California Desert Area, which is the next step in the four-year process. After a 30-day public review of the proposed plan and final EIS, BLM will issue the final plan.

The draft California Desert Plan really is four separate plans or alternatives:

--the no-action alternative would continue present management with little or no change. This alternative is required by law and serves as a baseline for measuring the effects and impacts of the other alternatives.

--the protection alternative is oriented toward the maximum preservation of natural and cultural resources, with emphasis on protecting fragile resource values.

--the use alternative focuses on meeting human demands by obtaining the highest degree of consumptive use and production that desert resources are capable of providing, while still meeting all minimum environmental protection standards required by law.

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--the balanced alternative provides for a variety of uses within the sustained yield capabilities of the public land resources. This alternative represents a central position between the protection and use alternatives.

The principal components of the plan are a series of multiple use classes which address broad regional concerns; plan elements, which constitute decisions regarding issues of major public concern; and areas of critical environmental concern, or ACECs, which deal with site-specific concerns. The multiple use classes are based on resource values, capabilities, and sensitivities. Each class has a set of resource management guidelines which specify the type and degree of use appropriate to that class. The multiple use classes are:

C - Controlled Use: This class is designed to preserve and protect wilderness values in areas that meet the criteria of the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is the most preservation-oriented and restrictive of the four classes.

L - Limited Use: This class gives priority protection to sensitive natural, scenic, ecological, and cultural resources while placing limitations on other uses that may conflict with or degrade these values. It is the second most restrictive and protection-oriented of the classes.

M - Moderate Use: This class provides for a wide variety of present and future uses under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield of renewable resources. It provides for tradeoffs between uses where conflicts occur and for mitigation of damages caused by permitted uses.

I - Intensive Use: This class is designed to provide use of lands and resources to meet human demands. It permits intensive land uses with reasonable mitigation and protection of sensitive resource values through rehabilitation when necessary. It is the most consumptive use-oriented class.

ELEMENTS

The next major component is the plan elements, which constitute decisions on major issues and provide a greater level of detail than the multiple use classes and resource management guidelines for each class. The elements are: cultural resources/Native American values; recreation; wilderness; motorized vehicle access; energy production/utility corridors; mineral exploration and development; livestock grazing and wild horses and burros; wildlife; and land tenure adjustment.

While the multiple use class designation of an area may allow a number of types and levels of use within the guidelines for that class, these uses may be totally incompatible in the same area at the same time. These conflicts, the major issues of the plan, are addressed in the nine plan elements. The task of the element is to resolve these conflicts within each class under the broader multiple use class guidelines.

The elements provide information about the nature and location of a resource or activity, identify subsequent active management plans to follow Desert Plan adoption, and describe decisions about the major tradeoffs in use.

ACECs

The third major planning component - areas of critical environmental concern - allows managers to focus special effort at the site of a distinctly rare or valuable resource. The need for this special consideration arises when the protective measures of the multiple use class and elements are not sufficient to prevent harm to the resources, which may be a historic, cultural, or scenic value, a wildlife resource, or other natural system or process. Unlike the other two plan components, which are tailored to meet the differing objectives of the plan alternatives, the number of

ACECs is constant for each alternative. There are 50 ACECs in each draft alternative which represent 87 special natural or cultural values.

LAW OF THE LAND

"... the California Desert environment is a total ecosystem that is extremely fragile, easily scarred, and slowly healed;

"... the California Desert environment and its resources, including certain rare and endangered species of wildlife, plants, and fishes, and numerous archaeological and historic sites, are seriously threatened by air pollution, inadequate Federal management authority, and pressures of increased use ...

"... the use of all California Desert resources can and should be provided for in a multiple use and sustained yield management plan to conserve these resources for future generations, and to provide present and future use and enjoyment, particularly outdoor recreation uses, including the use, where appropriate, of off-road recreational vehicles. . ."

To accomplish this:

"The Secretary . . . shall prepare and implement a comprehensive, long-range plan for the management, use, development, and protection of the public lands within the California Desert Conservation Area. Such plan shall take into account the principles of multiple use and sustained yield in providing for resource use and development, including, but not limited to, maintenance of environmental quality, rights-of-way, and mineral development. Such plan shall be completed and implementation thereof initiated on or before September 30, 1980."

Section 601, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Public Law 94-579, 43 U.S.C. 1701.

California Desert Conservation Area



CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Congress established the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) to provide "for the immediate and future protection and administration of the public lands in the California Desert within the framework of a program of multiple-use and sustained yield, and the maintenance of environmental quality."

The CDCA covers a region of 40,000 square miles of open space and wildland that is unique in its proximity to one of the world's major population centers as well as in the variety and extent of its cultural and natural resources.

Approximately half the Desert's 25 million acres is public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The table below shows the amount and percentage of public land administered by BLM in each of the four multiple use classes of the draft California Desert Plan alternatives. All BLM-managed public lands within the Desert are designated within one of the four multiple use classes, except where land ownership patterns require a case-by-case evaluation.

Multiple-Use Class Designations Under Four Alternative Plans
Acreage and Percentage (millions of acres)

Class	No-Action Alternative		Protection Alternative		Balanced Alternative		Use Alternative	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
C			5.22	43%	1.83	15%	.60	5%
L	4.41	36%	5.94	49%	5.26	43%	2.07	17%
M	6.51	54%	.55	5%	4.33	36%	7.47	62%
I	.94	8%	.14	1%	.42	4%	1.69	14%
None	.28	2%	.28	2%	.30	2%	.30	2%

C-Controlled Use; L-Limited Use; M-Moderate Use; I-Intensive Use

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation has been an integral part of developing the draft California Desert Plan alternatives. A focal point for this program has been the California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee. Beginning in 1977 and extending through 1979, the committee held a series of 15 public meetings attended by nearly 2,400 persons.

Persons who wish to comment on the draft plan alternatives and environmental impact statement are urged to use the workbook provided with the draft plan/EIS. The workbook relates to the specific components of the draft plan/EIS and is designed to help people provide meaningful input.

They also should plan to attend one of 12 public meetings to be held throughout the state near the end of the public review period. Copies of the workbook and the meeting schedule are available from BLM.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people.

California Desert Plan
Bureau of Land Management
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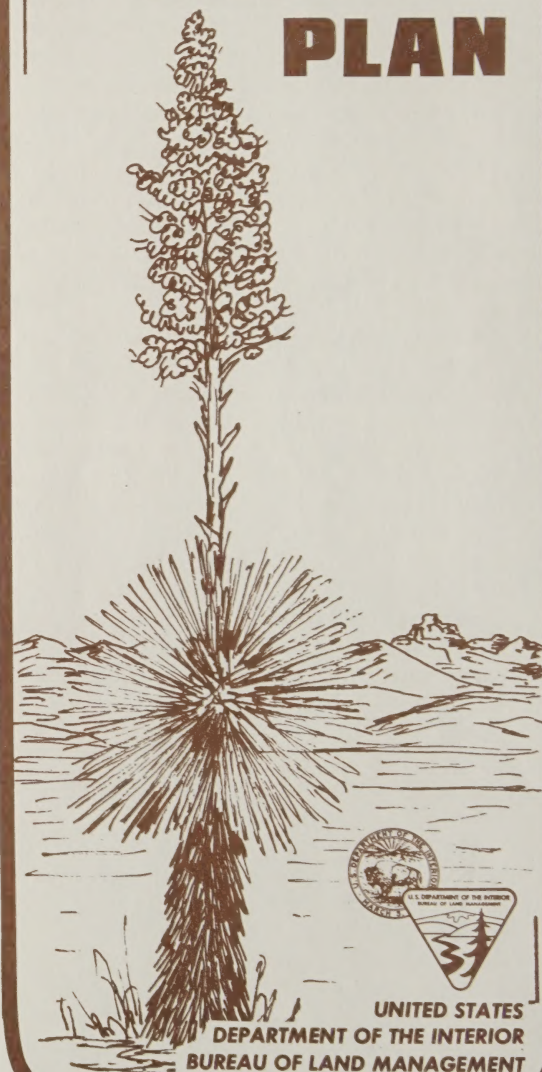
PHONE TOLL-FREE
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February 1980



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